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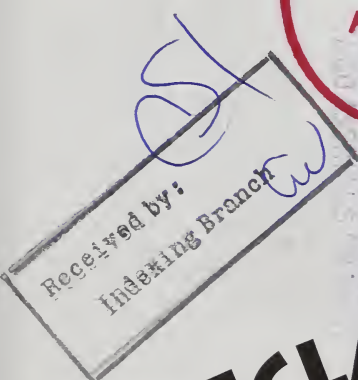
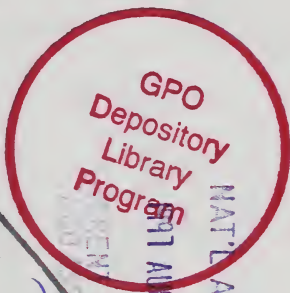
United States Department of Agriculture

Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

Program Aid No. 1083

Travelers' Tips

On Bringing Food, Plant, and Animal Products Into the United States



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DON'T PACK A PEST



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A Special Message for Travelers

Please take a few minutes to become familiar with restrictions on bringing agricultural products into the United States. This booklet lists acceptable agricultural products and tells you about other products that require permits or are prohibited.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) places limits on items brought to the United States from foreign countries as well as those brought to the mainland from Hawaii, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Prohibited items can harbor foreign animal and plant pests and diseases that could seriously damage America's crops, livestock, pets, and the environment.

Because of this threat, you are required to declare any meats, fruits, vegetables, plants, animals, and plant and animal products you have with you. Your declaration must cover all items carried in your baggage and hand luggage or in your vehicle.

One Piece Can Spell Danger

Travelers are often surprised when told that their "one little piece of fruit or meat" can cause serious damage. In fact, one item carelessly discarded can wreak havoc on American crops. For example, it's quite likely that a traveler carried in the wormy fruit that brought Mediterranean fruit flies to California in 1979. The 3-year fight to eradicate this pest cost more than \$100 million.

A single link of sausage contaminated with the dreaded virus that causes foot-and-mouth disease could do similar damage to the livestock business. Foot-and-mouth disease last struck the United States in 1929. Economists say that an outbreak today would cost farmers and consumers billions of dollars in lost production, higher food prices, and lost export markets.

Declarations Prevent Fines

The declaration you're required to make may be oral, written, or both. If you're traveling from abroad on a plane or ship, you will be given a Customs form on which to declare your agricultural products. You will also be asked to indicate whether you have visited a farm or ranch outside the United States.

Officers of USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) inspect passenger baggage for undeclared agricultural products. At some ports, they use beagle dogs to sniff out hidden items. At other ports, they use low-energy x-ray machines adapted to reveal fruits and meats.

Smugglers get caught. In an average month, more than 3,000 violations are uncovered. A traveler who fails to declare a prohibited item is fined on the spot (up to \$250), and the item is confiscated.



Fruits, Vegetables, and Plants

You may bring in some fruits, vegetables, and plants without advance permission, provided they are declared, inspected, and found free of pests. However, you must get a permit in advance to bring in certain plants and plant parts intended for growing. To bring back endangered or threatened plant species, in some cases you will need permits or certificates from the country of origin as well as from the U.S. Department of the Interior's Fish and Wildlife Service (see p. 10).

For information and permit applications, write: USDA, APHIS, Plant Protection and Quarantine, 4700 River Road, Unit 136, Riverdale, MD 20737-1236, Attn.: Permit Unit.

Meat and Animal Products

Regulations prohibit you from bringing in fresh, dried, and canned meats and meat products from most foreign countries. If any meat is used in preparing a product, it is prohibited. Commercially canned meat is allowed if the inspector can determine that the meat was cooked in the can after it was sealed to make it shelf-stable without refrigeration.

Hunting trophies, game-animal carcasses, and hides are severely restricted. If you intend to bring them in, write to the following address for applicable information and permit forms: USDA, APHIS, Veterinary Services, 4700 River Road, Unit 40, Riverdale, MD 20737-1231, Attn.: National Center for Import/Export.

Live Animals and Birds

Live animals and birds can enter the United States subject to certification, permits, inspection, and quarantine rules that vary with the animal and its origin. Dogs that have been in Central and South America pose a special health hazard if they have wounds infested with screwworms. If your dog has even a small wound, be sure to have it treated before you travel to the United States. The U.S. Public Health Service further restricts imports of dogs, cats, monkeys, and turtles (see p. 10).

Pet birds you purchased abroad for your personal use can enter, subject to restrictions by some State departments of agriculture, if quarantined by USDA for 30 days. Make quarantine arrangements in advance because facilities are limited and available at only certain ports. For information and a permit application, write the National Center for Import/Export at the address listed previously.

No Federal quarantine is required for personally owned U.S. pet birds returning to the United States. Bring along a valid U.S. veterinary health certificate that individually identifies each bird by referring to a leg band or tattoo. Be sure to keep your bird separated from other birds while out of country. No Federal quarantine is required for pet birds originating in Canada.

Other Biological Materials

You must have a permit to bring in most organisms, cells and cultures, monoclonal antibodies, vaccines, and related substances, whether of plant or animal origin. This category includes organisms and products used in the biotechnology industry. For information and a permit application, write the National Center for Import/Export at the address previously listed.

Soil, Sand, Minerals, and Shells

Soil-borne organisms threaten both plants and animals. If you visited a farm or ranch overseas, agricultural inspectors may have to disinfect your shoes or clothes. Vehicles must also be cleaned of soil.

You may not bring in any soil, earth, or sand, although 1 ounce or less of decorative beach sand is allowed. Rocks, minerals, and shells are allowed, but all sand and soil must be cleaned off. Products grown in soil (like shamrocks and truffles) must be free of soil.

What You Can Bring Back

When you plan your trip abroad, check the list of approved products. Keep in mind that this list is not all-inclusive. Also, whether or not an item you are bringing into this country appears on the list of approved products, you are still responsible for declaring to a Federal inspection officer every agricultural product in your possession.

Note that if you leave the United States with any U.S. agricultural products, you may not be allowed to bring them back in when you return to the country. Check with a U.S. border official before taking such goods across the border.

If you're unsure of what's allowed, call for help. Look in your phone book for the nearest office of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Plant Protection and Quarantine; or call the central office at (301) 734-8645. U.S. consulates abroad may also be able to answer many of your questions. In addition, APHIS' Internet web page (<http://www.aphis.usda.gov>) provides up-to-date information on this and other related topics.



General List of Approved Products

This list covers products from all areas except Canada, Mexico, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Bamboo, dried poles only

Beads made of seeds (but not jequirity beans)

Breads, cakes, cookies, and other bakery goods

Candies

Cheeses, fully cured (but not cottage cheeses)

Coconuts (but husks or milk must be removed)

Coffee, roasted beans only

Dried foods, including polished rice, beans, and tea

Fish

Flower bulbs (but not crocosomia, gladiolus, and watsonia bulbs from Africa, Argentina, Brazil, France, Italy, Malta, Mauritius, Portugal, or Uruguay)

Flowers, most fresh or dried kinds (but not with roots), except eucalyptus

Fruits, canned or dried products only

Herbarium plants (but not witchweed)

Herbs, dried, for medicinal use

Meats, canned (for restrictions, see p. 4)

Mushrooms

Nuts (but not chestnuts or acorns or nuts with outer husks)

Sauces, canned or processed

Seaweed

Seeds (Seeds of flowers and vegetables are generally enterable.

Seeds of woody trees and shrubs require a nursery stock permit from PPQ.)

Shamrocks, without roots or soil

Soup and soup mixes (but not those containing meat)

Spices, dried (but not curry leaves)

Straw animals, hats, baskets, and other souvenirs (but not items stuffed with straw)

Vegetables, canned or processed

List of Approved Products From Canada

Most products grown or produced in Canada can be entered into the United States. This includes vegetables, fruits other than black currants, and meat and dressed poultry (if accompanied by proof of origin).

List of Approved Products From Mexico

Products must have been produced or grown in Mexico. For meats, proof of origin is required.

<i>Acorns</i>	<i>Meats</i> (but not pork or uncooked poultry)
<i>Bananas</i>	
<i>Blackberries</i>	<i>Melons</i>
<i>Cactus fruits</i>	<i>Mexican jumping beans</i>
<i>Cerimans</i>	<i>Nuts</i>
<i>Coconuts</i> (but husks or milk must be removed)	<i>Papayas</i>
<i>Corn husks</i>	<i>Pineapples</i>
<i>Dates</i>	<i>Raspberries</i>
<i>Grapes</i>	<i>Strawberries</i>
<i>Limes</i>	<i>Tamarind bean pods</i>
<i>Lychees</i>	<i>Vegetables</i> (but not potatoes, sweet potatoes, or yams)

List of Approved Products From Hawaii

Products must have been produced or grown in Hawaii.

<i>Coconuts</i> (but not for travelers going to Florida)	<i>Nuts</i>
<i>Coffee</i> (roasted only)	<i>Papayas</i> (only if officially certified)
<i>Flowers</i> , including leis (but not mauna loas, gardenias, jade vines, or roses)	<i>Pineapples</i>
<i>Insects</i> , dried and preserved	<i>Seeds</i> , including seed jewelry and leis
<i>Meats</i>	<i>Sugar</i> (but not sugarcane)
	<i>Wood roses</i>

List of Approved Products From Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands

Products must have been produced or grown in Puerto Rico or the U.S. Virgin Islands.

<i>Avocados</i>	<i>Herbs, dried</i>
<i>Bananas</i>	<i>Leeks</i>
<i>Beans, fresh shelled</i>	<i>Meats</i>
<i>Breadfruits</i>	<i>Nuts</i>
<i>Breadnuts</i>	<i>Onions</i>
<i>Cacao beans</i>	<i>Papayas</i>
<i>Christophine fruit (chayotes)</i>	<i>Peas</i>
<i>Citrus fruits</i>	<i>Pineapples</i>
<i>Coconuts (but not for travelers going to Florida or Hawaii)</i>	<i>Plantains</i>
<i>Coriander</i>	<i>Pumpkins</i>
<i>Eggplant</i>	<i>Root crops, most kinds</i>
<i>Garlic</i>	<i>Seeds, dried</i>
<i>Genips</i>	<i>Squash</i>
<i>Ginger root</i>	<i>Strawberries</i>
<i>Gourds</i>	<i>Tamarind bean pods</i>

Information on Other Federal Requirements

The U.S. Customs Service collects import duties (taxes) and assists the U.S. Public Health Service in regulating the importation of dogs, cats, monkeys, and birds. Publications: "Know Before You Go (Customs Hints for Returning Residents)" and "Pets, Wildlife, U.S. Customs." Address: U.S. Customs Service, P.O. Box 7407, Washington, DC 20044. The U.S. Customs Service maintains a home page on the Internet. For up-to-date information, point your Web browser to <http://www.customs.ustreas.gov> and hit enter.

The U.S. Department of State issues passports for U.S. citizens to travel abroad. Consular officers overseas issue visas for foreign citizens to enter the United States. Publications: "Your Trip Abroad" and "Foreign Entry Requirements" from the Consumer Information Center. Contact: Passport agencies located in Boston, Chicago, Honolulu, Houston, Los Angeles, Miami, New Orleans, New York, Philadelphia, San Francisco, Seattle, Stamford, and Washington, DC, or a U.S. embassy or consulate abroad. For emergency assistance for U.S. citizens traveling overseas, call (202) 647-5226. For recorded travel information, call (202) 647-5225.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service regulates the import/export of wild and endangered plants and animals and their products. Publications: "Facts About Federal Wildlife Laws" and "Buyer Beware Guide." Address: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Office of Management Authority, 4401 North Fairfax Dr., Arlington, VA 22203.

